



# **Importance Of Group Work For ESL Students In Bangladesh: A Tertiary Level Perspective**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Masters of Arts in ELT and Applied Linguistics**

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### **Abstract**

**As we have seen, some students find it effective when they work in a group in ESL class. They think it really helps them to improve their English whereas some students find it difficult to work in groups. Therefore, this following paper will be concerned about how people can get help from group studies. The research will be investigating how effective group work can be for ESL learners. It will be focusing on the student's feelings and responses about group work. It will also include some teachers who are providing help to teach and learn English. My study would include a questionnaire that will include both closed and open-ended questions. The research will include 50 tertiary students from English department and 10 teachers. It will also include the list of activities that involve students to perform in a group and its positive and negative effects on it. It will also include the questionnaires for the teachers to get the idea of having group work in the class and their positive and negative effects on it.**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Learning is autonomous. People learn things from their surroundings. They observe, they hear, get information, receive idea, try to remember and learn. Language is an ongoing process. At present, the English language learning is a challenge for all of us. Sometimes we learn it unconsciously. However, it is not as easy to learn as the way young people learn in their early stage. For adult learners, it is quite hard for them to learn a second language. To achieve fluency and accuracy, they need lots of practice, proper guidance and strategies for learning a second language. In contrast, communication is important; we cannot learn things if we do not interact with people. In Bangladesh, many of our adult learners struggle a lot to understand the language. In the classroom, we communicate with teachers, get help and we learn from them. However, it is not enough. Most of our Bangladeshi students feel difficulty to understand when they study alone. They need cooperation. However, there are different types of learners. They have different styles, choices and level of intelligence to study. Some students learn quickly by studying alone whereas other students prefer to study with the help of others. In a classroom, a student's performance is an important factor. It is significant for the teachers to know if the students comprehend their lesson properly or not. Sometimes, we see that the teacher gives a task to individual students to perform in the class and they fail to do it. On the other hand, in group work the result comes out differently. Student performs well when they work together. Therefore, group work is another issue for learning a language. Group work is a kind of activity that helps students to perform well in their studies and accelerate their learning process. Generally, in a language class, teachers do not get enough time to finish their task as they have short time. In an individual task, students usually take time to understand the topics and make mistakes when they perform. Therefore, teachers try to arrange group work for the task. It is also common in

Bangladesh that many students study in a group before exams come. Most of them find it easy to understand the lesson when they study in-group. However, as learners have different culture and choices, therefore, their points of views are different. Sometimes in a group study there a lots of arguments occur in spite of having different ideas from students. Some teachers even identify group study as an obstacle. Therefore, they try to avoid. When I think of myself as a student, I would rather feel comfortable studying in a group than studying alone myself. It gives me the opportunity to learn many ideas that other students have on their mind. It might not be true for others always as it depends on task and situations.

### **Purpose of my Research**

The main purpose of this survey is to find out to what extent the students and teachers believe that the group work is effective for language learning and whether they really enjoy having group work in the class or not.

### **Objective**

To some extent, group work is very helpful. Many students and teachers find it more challenging. Therefore, the objective of my research is to see the importance of group study and its impact on learning a second language. On the other hand, group work needs cooperation and understanding among teachers and students. Therefore, my objective is to find out the responses of the students and teachers about having a group study in the class and their thoughts about it.

**Limitations**

I wanted to include public universities for my research. Since public universities have more students in the class, it is very difficult for the teachers to make their students work in group. That is why I had to choose only private universities for my research. During my research, I have found very few students were not at all interested to fill up the questionnaires. Besides, most of the teachers and students were very cooperative for my research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Definitions of group work**

Previously, many researchers have been published regarding learning strategies. Group study is one of them. According to Vidal a group is something which can include classrooms, families, gamers, chatters etc that we have around us (Vidal, 2006, p.1). He also mentioned that we learn consciously from those groups. However, he suggested working with some people in a room does not mean group work; it needs coordination, cooperation and understanding each other in group. Weimer suggested that no matter how much we hate or love group work; it is one of the effective strategies of learning a lesson that creates a powerful learning experience among students (Wiemer, 1986, p.2). Burdett pointed out that group study is a learning strategy that gives the students possibilities to operate and negotiate their individual idea with others (as cited in Burdett, 2003, p.177). Kriflik and Mullan advocated that working in a group is kind of cooperating learning approach that furnishes students learning positively (as cited in Kriflik & Mullan, 2007, p.14). They also pointed out that group work is a significant project that helps to improve learner's social and personal skill as well (as cited in Kriflik & Mullan, 2007, p.14). Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines, and Galton has pointed out that group work means working in a team where the teacher may be involved at different phases and try to balance the rights and control of the work changes toward the students themselves (as Blatchford et al. 2003, p.2). Sugino has suggested that group work escalates students' language practice and develop students' quality of talk (as cited in Sugino, 1994, p.104). Salas advocated that group work is a common term that includes range of techniques where two or more students are appointed a task that involves cooperation and self-initiated learning (Salas, 2005, p.2). Hock defined group work in different way. He used the term called "buzz group" where five or more pupils work for a

short period for immediate purpose. It facilitates their learning and students can utilize their time properly ( Hock, 1961, p. 420). According to the University Teaching Development Centre of Victoria University (n.d) group work is something that holds to achieve some teaching and learning goals. According to Sheedi and Region (n.d), group work is not just a work where students sit side by side and work together; it is more than being physically close to other students.



## **2.2 Advantages**

Wiemer has pointed out that activity as group work has the potential to develop students' progression in new information, which accelerates learning (Wiemer, 1986, p.2). Salas also pointed out the group work can reduce student's shyness and make them feel invincible ((Salas, 2005, p.4). She also mentioned that group work encourages the students in leaning and taking responsibilities. Sheedi and Region (n.d), pointed out that group work not only often help to develop the social and language skills but also help the students to support each other while working in a creative task. Livingstone and Lynch suggested that group work has the power of ability to develop student's cognitive skills and stimulate their thoughts, change their attitude and help students' tolerance to others (Livingstone and Lynch, 2000, p. 326). According to Vidal, group work makes a balance between the sense of unity and responsibility of group members and helps member to solve the problem and completing the task (Vidal, 2006, p4).

### **2.3 Objectives of group work**

According to Neville, (n.d) group work is a kind of challenge for university students. He again mentioned that it is a challenge that all students take to overcome their problems, which they face during studies. According to the University Teaching Development Centre of Victoria University (n.d) a main objective of a group work is to provide help to develop students' inner quality. That means students will get to know how to work as a team, will be able to self-direct and can develop their communication skill while working in a group. The objective also includes developing their personal skills, performance and promoting students autonomy by assigning some responsibility for learning and teaching. According to Vidal group work, include two important matters. They are as follows

- Tasks that needs to be done by solving the problem.
- The process of group work itself through which the group members act as a unit.

(Vidal, 2006, p.3)

## 2.4 Grouping and construction

Neville (n.d) has pointed out that most people have an experience of being a member of a group before they come to the university. They get those experiences from family, community, and neighborhood or from their own interests. According to the University Teaching Development Centre of Victoria University (n.d) three types of group can be generate for performing a task. They a as follows

- **The informal group:** A group composed of students who work together to perform a discussion or test in a class.
- **The Formal group:** A group of student work for a longer period to perform a specific task.
- **Study team:** This type of group developed to giving support to member for the duration of course.

According to the University of North Carolina, group work may have a simple or complex structure that can be appropriate for specific task (anonymous, 2006). It has mentioned that a simple group may be composed of four to five people to perform a discussion, listening or readings activities for short time. On the other hand, a complex group work may consist of six or more people who are structured and cooperation that works for in depth discussion and exploratory learning with the help of the teacher for longer period of time (Anonymous, 2006). However, arranging a group work needs proper environment and domestic support. In other words, classroom-seating arrangement is an important factor for making group members more attentive and maintaining valuable time of instruction of the teacher (Wannarka and Raul, 2008, p. 89). If the classroom is large, it is easy to have a group work. Scrivener has suggested

different kinds of seating arrangement in the class, which might be helpful for the teachers as well as for the students. They are as follows:

### **Pairs**

In the pairs seating arrangement, two students sit together in a pair. The seats can be placed in a row and column. It can be place in scattered way if the classroom is big. This kind of seating arrangement will helpful for the students to lots of pair task and pair presentation (Scrivener, 1994, p.89).

### **Enemy corners**

This is another type of seating arrangement in the class. Here, the students divide into two groups and sit in the two corners of the class facing each other. The teacher stands in between of them. Group work and discussion can do by this type of seating arrangement (Scrivener, 1994, p.89).

### **Opposing team**

This is a kind of arrangement where seats are placed in two sides of the class and the students will seat facing each other. The students will work here as a team. The teacher will be standing in the middle. However, the differences are that the teacher can view all students who are sitting in a row together. Debate, group discussion, pair works are possible in this arrangements (Scrivener, 1994, p.89).

### **Face to face**

Face to face, arrangement is similar to opposing team arrangements. Here, the two teams of student sit very closer by facing each other. The teacher sits in the middle. Group work, pair work, individual work can do by this arrangements (Scrivener, 1994, p.89).

**Panel**

This type of arrangement is like where students sit in a u-shaped arrangement. Teacher will be in front of them. It is a good seating arrangement when the classroom is average. There can be a good eye contact between the teachers and students. The teacher can do individual, pair work in this arrangement. Teacher can ask students to have an individual presentation (Scrivener, 1994, p.89).

**Public meeting**

These types of arrangement are very common to all of the educational institution. There are individual seats for all students in the class placing in a few rows and columns. Teacher stands in front of the students. This is also helpful arrangements for both teacher and students. Individual work, presentation can also possible by this arrangement. Teacher can move to each students and monitor the whole classroom by walking around in the classroom (Scrivener, 1994, p.89).

According to Wanarka and Ruhl, seating arrangement plays a vital role in the classroom because it helps to prevent students committing detrimental behavior, which is good for pair work. Scrivener has pointed out that pair seating arrangement can be helpful for the students in pair task and presentation (Scrivener, 1994, p.89). Most of the classes in Bangladesh have row seating arrangements; this type of class is usually teacher-dominated class where majority of students feel inhibited to speak. Genuine communication rarely takes place in that setting; therefore, some teachers prefer to make student work in a group. As Salas has suggested that students who are very shy feel more comfortable in-group work and more confident than seating in teacher fronted class((Salas, 2005, p.4). As there are many kinds of seating arrangement, it is the teacher's concern to make the best use of class. Construction is needed for effective group

work. Teacher needs to find out when and for which activity to make a group. Usually in classroom, young learners do not ask questions if they get problems. As Parris has pointed out that constructing an interesting problem could make students work together in-group, helps building their knowledge and make an effective use of group work (as cited in Parris. 2009, p.71). Student's participation in a group work is necessary; group work is very helpful in that way. Parris also advocated that group work is the easiest way of increasing students talk and making group work more effective (as cited in Parris. 2009, p.71). According to University Teaching Development Centre of Victoria University (n.d), lecturer roles are important. When the group work is going on, they are possible become group member, a guide, adviser and can help to solve the internal problems. They have also mentioned that the teachers can make the group work effective, try to break the ice between the students and encourage them to identify their weakness and strength. That is why we call teachers 'facilitators'. Therefore, they should motivate student to talk when they are working in-group.

## 2.5 Techniques and Instructions

There are lots of activities by which a teacher can incorporate in their class for making a group work. Salas has pointed out a few numbers of activities for group work. Those activities involve discussion, debates, problem-solving situation, simulations/role plays, news forecast, story creation, dramatization etc (Salas, 2005, p.5). She also mentioned a series of steps that a teacher should follow for making a successful group work.

**Introduce the techniques:** In a group work, the learner should know the activity that they are going to perform. They should know their partners, their individual responsibilities and the problem that will solve with the help of their group members (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Model the techniques:** Once the students or group members get to know that they are supposed to do, the teacher should give them instructions. The teacher should work like a representation of the technique where they will describe the characteristics of the task (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Give explicit instruction:** For any members of the group it is important for them to get a clear instruction. A teacher's duty is to explain it in short and simple sentences. If the task contains steps then the student should know them clearly (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Give useful expression:** The teacher must let the students know all of the expression that a task would contain. It is the most significant features of a group work. The teacher should practice before performing in the classroom (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Divide the class into groups:** It would be nice if the teacher let the students work with new people in-group whenever the new activity will start. Therefore, teacher should follow some grouping techniques in the class (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Assign roles:** It is not always happen that all the strong members will make a one group. A group might have contained idle pupil. Even though the students know their responsibilities, it would be nice if the

teacher designate their roles in a task. The idle students might be forced by the teacher to work hard and work more than others in a group (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Check for clarification:** This is very important parts of group work. The teacher must know if his/her students have understood the task clearly or not. The teacher must elucidate it before performing the task (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Set the task in motion:** After explaining all the above steps, the teacher should start the work (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Monitor the task:** During the time of their group work, the teacher should not just sit and watch their activities. The teacher should walk around the class and check if they are doing their work properly or not. The teacher might help students to find out their grammatical errors and pronunciation problem during the task. The teacher if necessary should write a note while checking the tasks. It would be beneficial if the teacher puts grade on student's performance. However, that would depend on the different types of activity (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Set a time for debriefing and feedback: to make the activity:** To make an activity effective this step is significant. All members of group need to present and share their own work with others. Even though the time can be an important factor, teacher needs to motivate and praise students work after the task that they have completed. The teacher must give them feedback, allocate their weakest point individually, correct their mistakes and give comments. It will help learners to know the main purpose of their activity that they have done in class (Salas, 2005, p.8).

Salas has pointed out that, the most common techniques are giving numbers to the students and then make group according to the numbers. She mentioned that students love to make their own group that is sometime very disturbing and annoying for the teachers to some



extent (Salas, 2005, p.8). She also suggested some random techniques for selecting group member. They are as follows:

**Using birth dates:** Students will stand up and ask their peers what their zodiac sign is. They will ask according to their month of birth (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Postcard:** The students will make a postcard then cut it into pieces and make a puzzle. The quantity of pieces will depend on the number of groups to be formed. Then, a teacher asks students to stand up and match the pieces to make a puzzle. This the way they will form a group (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Pictures:** Students will get pictures and then ask to look for pictures that belong to same category (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Antonyms and synonyms:** Students will look for words that have been previously elucidated in the class and use them for grouping. Each student will get a word in a piece of paper and will look for two antonym or synonym of those words. If they find out the correct synonym or antonym, they will form a group (Salas, 2005, p.8).

**Pronunciation:** This technique is helpful for pronunciation. Here, the teacher will choose one sound that the students have been practiced in the class previously. The teacher will give a word with same sound in a bold faced and underlined to each student. Students have to find out their partner containing similar sound and word (Salas, 2005, p.8-9).

**Proverbs or idiomatic expressions:** Teacher will select proverbs with idiomatic expressions that the students have already studied in their class. The teacher will divide them in two, three or four parts. The number of parts will match the size of the group. Then, each student will get a

piece of paper with one part of the proverb and will look for the rest to complete the proverb (Salas, 2005, p.9).

**Definitions:** This activity includes three or more definition of a word. One student will get a main word and will find out the other three or four words that have the other meanings (Salas, 2005, p.9).

**Topics:** Teacher will make a group according to the different topics studied in previous classes. Topics may vary based on the level of student's proficiency. Then the students will have to think about products related to those categories that they have chosen and will write them on small pieces of paper. The students will hand out those pieces and will ask their peers to group themselves according to the category they have (Salas, 2005, p.9).

## **2.6 Disadvantages of group work**

Burdett has pointed out that group work is not always viewed in a positive way. He mentioned that since it is a collaborative learning where it requires the students to perform actively might be difficult and new to them (as cited in Burdett, 2003, p. 178). Previously, we have seen some advantages of group work; however, group work has many drawbacks as well. We live in a multicultural society. In the classroom, we get students from different cultures and different societies. According to Sugino, a student who is more talkative can provide much more help in taking decision in-group and have influence on other members of the group (Sugino, 1994, p.104). However, she has pointed out that from cultural perspective students from Asian countries are less talkative, more submissive, and anxious and tend to give less information in the class (as cited in Sugino, 1994, p.104). Many teachers have doubt about activating a group work in classroom. Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines, and Galton have suggested that many teachers believe group work involves losing control over children. Sometimes it is overly time consuming. They also mentioned group work means less able students are getting help only by the brighter students which might create problem in group work (As cited in Blatchford et al. 2003,p.4). Macdonough and Shaw have pointed out that conducting group work is a complex structure that necessitates greater role discrimination between individual students as well as corporal reshuffle of the class (Macdonough and Shaw, 2003, p. 197). Salas stated students talking in a group might form problem for other group members (Salas, 2005, p.4). However, she pointed out that the noise in a group work is kind a good noise because this noise make students engaged in learning task and gives opportunity to use more English (Salas, 2005, p.4).

Earlier I have mentioned a classroom has various kinds of students. Roberts (n.d) has pointed out that student personalities is an important factor that might affect on instructions in a

class. She mentioned that students personality play a key role in activities and in larger community classroom. She also mentioned that in multilevel class, students' performances are more or less similar. In that situation, some students perform low level and some students perform high level. From the multiple intelligence points of view, we see that human characteristic have multiple aspects that we must concern in education. As Richards and Rodgers has pointed out that, the talents of people are leveled with multiple intelligence models (as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.115). However, Salas has mentioned that group work somehow supports this application of multiple intelligence theory. She said in a group work students try their best use of individual ability. Activities like writing and reporting, learners do their best the way they want to (Salas, 2005, p.4).

Like some teachers, some students do prefer to work in a group. Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, and Miller have pointed out Vygotsky's common concepts of Zone of proximal development. They said Vygotsky's zone of proximal development presumes that the relationship between more capable and less capable persons on a task where it shows in a group task less competent person seems more proficient and independent (as cited in Kozulin et al. 2003, p.2). Therefore, some students feel comfortable to work alone where some students do better with the other in-group work. Speaking of Vygotsky's theory, they also mentioned that a child develops its character abstractly by psychological structure and function that is their perception, thinking, memory and speech (as cited in Kozulin et al. 2003, p.5). Student's mental developments are important and might have affects while working in groups. In Bangladesh, we have different types of educational institutions; in some institution, we have either all males or all females. From the sociolinguistic point of view, there is a difference between gender talk. Wardhaugh has suggested that males tend to have negative attitudes and talk evidently non-

consequential matters then females (Wardhaugh, 2010, p. 336). Therefore, males and females working in-group cause lots of trouble and create disturbances in the class. That is why Blatchford, Kutnick and Baines has mentioned some teachers came up with the situations where conflict occur specially by the boys in a group because of their misbehavior ( as cited in Blatchford et al. 2007, p.4). However, Salas has suggested that teachers still need to work as a director in that situation and make students aware of discipline (Salas, 2005, p.4). Interdependence is important while students are working in-group. Sometimes we see that one student is attentive whereas the other student does not co-operate. That is why Salas mentioned that when all members work in-group, new ideas, information comes out from everyone however, if someone stops sharing then the task gets mutilated (Salas, 2005, p.2).

## **2.7 Effects of group work on Learning**

We are human beings, being such we learn from nature and society. For English as a second Language learner, it is our responsibility to use English and learn more about it. Zehlar has pointed out that ELL students need to work for a variety of students both ELL and English proficient students and teacher must support it (Zehler, 1994, p.13). She also mentioned that in a group mixing with ELL students and proficient English speakers would give students opportunity to use English within a meaningful context (Zehler, 1994, p.10). She also mentioned that learning in a cooperative group needs more practice and guidance for students. However, teachers need to be aware of the cultural groups because some people prefer to work independently rather than work in a group. Teachers need to balance between the activities so that the students feel comfortable (Zehler, 1994, p.10). Salas has pointed out that in group work students get opportunity to use native language more whenever they get chances. However, Salas suggested that using English in face-to-face context and make them aware of importance of English might help students to avoid those habits (Salas, 2005, p.5).

### **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants and the area of research**

For my research, I have chosen 50 students and 10 teachers from renowned Universities of Dhaka. I have selected tertiary level students and some teachers from literature and ELT stream for my survey. All my participants have participated with their own interests and responded to all the answers of the questionnaire that I have given to them.

#### **Instruments**

I have made two different types of questionnaires for my survey. One was for the teachers and the other was for students. The questionnaire included ten different questions about group work. I collected information based on the responses to the questionnaire from teachers and students.

#### **Data entry**

All The data of my survey have been clarified by using MS OFFICE XP and MS Word.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

#### The questionnaire for Teachers

In this section, I will discuss about the teachers' questionnaire. Their questionnaire has included both open and closed ended questions. The first question was about the time they prefer group work in the class. Most the teachers have not said 'No' to have a group work in their class. They said it depends on the nature of the chapters, topics and courses. Few teachers gave reason to make their students work in group. Some teachers want their student to think critically, share their opinions and have present in the class. Therefore, they make their students work in a group. Few teachers also mentioned about time and seating arrangements. One of the teachers has mentioned that if the classroom were big with many students, student would need group work. One teacher said brainstorming is good for group work. Other teacher found group work is good for composition class. One of the teachers said group work is good in the middle of the class work.

**The following table will show the number of teacher who agree group work is effective in the class**

	Number of teacher	Definitely yes	Definitely No	sometimes
Group work in the class	10	0	0	10



The second question was whether they think group work is effective or not and the reason. All teachers said yes for it but not always. They mentioned various reasons behind it. They said students could share their ideas, develop their cognitive skills and make them more creative. Students can collect different ideas and can give their own opinion. One teacher mentioned through group work, students get opportunity to work in team, can face and overcome many challenges and can understand the notion of tolerance. Whereas some other teacher mentioned group work is not effective for small classes and it creates noise in the class. One teacher mentioned it gives student to talk more in the class.

**The following table will show the number of teacher who thinks it is effective**

	Number of teacher	Definitely yes	Definitely No	sometimes
Effective	10	0	0	10

The next question was if there any specific skills that the teacher wants to focus while having group work in their class. Majority of the teacher said they do focus on their speaking skills as it allows students to speak and share ideas with others. Other teacher said it improves their reading, writing and helpful for their cognitive development. One teacher mentioned that teamwork is focus of group work whereas other teacher said it depends on student when they try to think about something relying on their schemata.

**The following table show the number of teachers who focus on different skills**

Skills	Number of Teachers
Reading	5
Writing	3
Speaking	4
Cognitive	5

The fourth question was whether the teachers really get any benefit from making their students working in group. One teacher said group work improves student's interaction and cooperation. Other teachers said it is enthusiastic, released their boredom; take less time to accomplish the task and more content is corrected through group work. One teacher said it helps them to become best performer in the class whereas other had mentioned student get familiar with others, could collect different ideas and make the task better.

**The following table will show the number of teacher who think they get benefits from making their students work in group**

	Total teachers	Always	Never	Sometimes
Benefit	10	0	0	10

The next question was whether teacher would prefer to select his or her own group or let students to choose their group members. Most of the teachers gave similar answer for the questions. One teacher said it depends on the situations. Sometimes students choose their own group that makes lots of chaos whereas some students keep quiet when teacher select their group.

Other teacher said if the students' backgrounds are same and have same level of knowledge about particular issue then it would be better to let the students choose their own group otherwise not. One has mentioned that teacher should take the decision where as other said both teacher and students need to take turn. Few teachers said mixing in the group is necessary. However, one of the teachers thinks that student should choose their own group because they need to be comfortable with each other.

**The following table will show the number of teacher who prefer to make group by their own and let the students to choose their own members**

	Teacher made group	Students made group	Teacher and students made group
Agree	3	1	6

The sixth question was an open-ended one. It was included four different answers from where all teachers had chosen one. The question was like which is the best statement the teacher think. All teachers answered that they like their student work in a group when it is necessary.

The seventh question was about the negative effects of group work that the teachers get from group work. One teacher said it is sometimes chaotic and students become more comfortable. Whereas some other teachers said not all students work in a group, sometimes they get out from the topic, some students keep quiet and do nothing, and weaker students might persuaded by stronger one in a group. Sometimes students use more L1 then L2 in the class.

The eighth question was whether there are any possible negative impacts that might create a barrier on learning. They said that group work might be less interactive. In a group,

some pupil gets good grades without doing anything. Students might get fear, become introvert and students might feel demotivated by the teachers. One teacher said lacking of monitoring might result negative in-group work whereas other teacher said if the teacher properly administrated the group, it will not have any bad effect in a group.

The ninth question was when and what type of students the teacher think should work in a group. As all of them had already mentioned the reason of having group work, one teacher the group work should be interactive and enthusiastic. They mentioned every type of students needs to have a group work. Some said, Students who are confident and who loves reading could fit for the group.

The final question was about a teacher's overall feeling about group work. Most of them have mixed feeling about group work. One teacher said group work depends on the variable, students, types of activities. Some teacher thinks it is very effective whereas some other teacher think it does not work sometime. Some teachers think it is necessary components and can be very effective the teacher properly managed to do it.

### **The questionnaire for Students**

In this section, I will talk about the result of student's questionnaire. I made separate and bit different questions for them. The questions are included both open and closed ended questions. I made this question to get their feeling about group work, whether they think it is effective or not. After my research, I found that most of the students had replied for the questions and gave their opinion. The first question was about their feeling of group work. Majority of the students (84%) gave positive answer for this question. They said it is very effective and helpful. It gives them opportunity to work and discuss with their partners. They

said while discussing in a group, they feel comfortable and get to learn the topic easily. One student had found it challenging whereas other mentioned that it is fun to work in groups. Few students replied in both positive and negative way. They said it is sometimes effective if the students are cooperative and sometimes it is not good at all, whereas other student said group work is not helpful.

**The following table will show the percentages of different number of students mentioned about their feelings.**

Option	Total student	Responses	Percentage
Helpful	50	42	84%
Helpful and harmful	50	7	14%
Not helpful	50	1	2%

The second question was when they prefer group work. The answers came up variously. Majority of the students replied that they prefer group work when they get lots of pressure from work, difficult task to do, assignments in the class. On the other hand, some students said that they do not like working in a group inside of the class. They prefer group work in library or somewhere else when they have free time. Some students said they like to do it before quizzes and exams. Few students said that they like to do group work before presentation. Some students answered quite differently from other. They said they prefer group work when they know their group members whereas other said when the time is short for work. Two students said they like to do work alone.

**The following table will show the percentage of students who prefer group work for different purpose**

Option	Total students	Responses	Percentage
Assignments and work	50	26	52%
Presentations	50	6	12%
Before exam ,Outside of class and free time	50	5	10%
Different reasons	50	10	20%
Never	50	2	4%

The third question was whether group work is helpful for learning the language or not. Majority of the students have replied that it is very effective of helpful for them. Since it gives them to communicate with native speakers, they get opportunity to use language more than other time. They also mentioned that different student might have good vocabulary skills and sentences; therefore, they get to learn about the language from the group. However, few students have said that group work never helped them to learn language. They said it might help to do the task easily but it does not help them to learn the language.

**The following table will show the percentages of students who think group work helps to learn language and who thinks it is not helpful at all**

Option	Total students	Responses	Percentage
Helpful	50	43	86%
Not Helpful	50	7	14%

The fourth question was if they study alone, how much they understand the task out of hundred. Most of the students have responded but few students found difficulty to rank their understanding level.

**The following table shows the rate**

Rating	Total students	Responses	Percentage
50%	50	8	16%
60%	50	9	18%
70%	50	7	17%
80%	50	10	20%
90 %	50	12	24%
0%	50	4	8%

The fifth question I asked whether they prefer their friends in group or other people to work with them. Majority of the students prefer their own friends in group study. They said it is very comfortable to work with their friends since they know each other well then other people. They feel free to communicate and can ask anything if they do not understand about the task. Few students prefer to work with friends and others. They said it is an opportunity to know other persons in a group learn new things and share problems about topics or tasks. On the other hand, some students believe learning is autonomous and cannot be learn with friends or others. Two students only like to work with others instead of friends. They think that there will be more chat than study with friends.

**The following table shows the information about the students who like to work with friends and others**

Option	Total students	Responses	Percentage
With Friends	50	36	72%
With Other	50	2	6%
With Both	50	8	16%
None	50	4	8%



The sixth question was about the skills the students can develop through group study. Majority of the student replied that they could improve their speaking skill by group study. Other students said that they could improve their listening skills by group study. Some students think that their writing can develop by group study. Other students believe that they can improve all skills by group study whereas few pupils believe that they can improve only writing and listening through group study.

### **Outcome of group study**

Option	Total students	Responses	Percentage
Reading	50	1	2%
Writing	50	5	10%
Speaking	50	16	32%
Listening	50	7	14%
All	50	4	8%
Reading and listening	50	1	2%
Reading, speaking and listening	50	2	4%
Reading and speaking	50	2	4%
Writing and listening	50	2	4%
Writing, speaking and listening	50	2	4%
Speaking and listening	50	6	12%

Next, I collected data from the students about how often they prefer the group study. Some students prefer to work in group for assignments whereas others prefer to work with their friend all time. Few students want to work in a group sometimes.

**The following table will show the information that I have gather from the students.**

Option	Total students	Responses	Percentage
Group work for assignments	50	12	24%
Group work all the time	50	8	16%
Group work sometimes	50	26	52%
No need	50	4	8%

The eighth question was about the problem associated with group work. The first thing the students mentioned was communication problem. They said that in a group work some people work whereas others keep quite. Therefore, they get less information. They also mentioned that some pupils like to control the group members that create argument. Sometimes one of the group members does not listen to others or accept others opinion which might create a problem in a group.

The next question was about the suggestions from the students about how to make the group study more effective. Majority of the students said that if the students work equally and try to understand and accept others opinion, the work would be effective. Few students said if the teacher let them, select own members it will be effective. Others said if the teacher administrated the group properly, the group work would be effective. Few students said if the teacher let them

sit with senior or advance level students the group might work well. Student's sincerity might help the group work more effective. Timing can be a major problem of group work

The last question is about the students overall opinion of group work. Most of the students said it is effective and helpful for the student. If the students in a group cooperate with each other, the task can be done properly. They said group work does not work well if the students do not want to share information. Therefore, everyone should listen and understand others. Some of the students mentioned that it is one of the activities where the students get to know different people, can exchange opinions and make their best effort to accomplish the task. It is also good source of developing writing, reading, listening and speaking skills. Group work facilitates the students to work in a team. They face different challenges to overcome their shortcomings while working in a group. They mentioned that through group work they get to learn new things.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Analysis and recommendation**

In order to compare and contrast teachers, students feelings and thoughts of having group work in class I have chosen both of them. Teachers are those who always look forward to improving their students' language skills and knowledge. Therefore, they try to make their students work in groups so that they can feel comfortable, get rid of their fears and can develop their skills. On the other hand, students need to have some change while they are having study pressure in class. Group work is something where the students can get a chance to meet different people, can communicate and share their own opinion with each other. That is why I have chosen students as my survey instrument to see whether they get benefit from group work and to what extent group work is effective for them to develop their language. My survey results show some connection and divergence among the view of teachers and student about having group work in class.

After my survey, I came to know that there is similar connection in between both teacher and students opinion about group study. My result shows that almost 90% of teachers said that group work is effective to some extent and 92% of students said they really like to have group study as much as possible in the class. My survey results illustrate the current situation of tertiary level students of some renowned Universities of Dhaka.

Most of the teachers and students are confident about their perspective of having group work in class. Both of them have pointed out some significant reasons having group study in the class. We know that most teachers want their class work and syllabus to be finished on time and students get to learn properly from their classes. However, packed routine and syllabuses might cause a big problem. Sometimes teacher feel that few students feel difficulty while working

alone and need to develop their particular skills. Therefore, group work is sometimes necessary. The majority of the teachers said that students need to develop their cognitive and speaking skills in class and group work somehow helps them to some extent. They also mentioned that through group work shy students might become confident and get to chance to speak out in the class. It also improves their schemata and helps them to take challenges. They also mentioned through group work difficult things become easier and students get chances to exchange their opinion and helps them to accomplish their goals on time. Some of the teachers also believe that group work is a significant component and should be practiced in class. In contrast, we see that most of the students try to find pleasure from study. Packed routine and class work might causes boredom for the student. Student love to work with their peers while having pressure from assignments therefore, they need group study while necessary. From my survey results, the majority of the students like to work in a group. They feel it is easy and comfortable to work with their peers and other students. They said group work facilitates them to communicate with different types of people and gives them chances to develop their four skills to some extent. They also mentioned that from group work, they get ideas, learn new words, improve their vocabulary and accomplish their goals on time. Therefore, we can notice that both teachers and students get benefit from group work.

However, everything has its own drawbacks; as we see that group work has many advantages, it has some problems as well. From my survey, I found a few differences among teachers and students reflection regarding to this issue. Most teachers (75%) said it has many problems whereas just a few students (6%) have found it problematic. Therefore, we see that in this case, teacher's percentage is higher than the students. The reason behind this difference in percentage was that the teachers only know what is actually their students need to do for

developing their language learning and need to have group study in class whereas students only want entertainment in their daily life. As they get more chances to talk with their partners they find it fun for learning.

Having information from the survey results about various problems of group work some teacher mentioned students participation in group work classroom. As we know that in Bangladesh most of the universities do not have enough space and time to make their students work in group; classrooms and student numbers are an important factor. On the other hand, we see many different types of learners in the class. Some students are active whereas others do not want to talk much, which is the primary reason of making students work in group. Therefore, few teachers said if the classroom is large with many students group work is possible. They said that while having groups work, they found students do not participate equally. Sometimes poor students get good marks without doing anything while stronger students gain lower marks. Another thing is the students' background; one of the teachers said if the students groups do not maintain the same background, there might be some problems. Few teachers felt that stronger students try to persuade weaker students in a group to participate and start arguments. However some of the teacher think that when students work with their known pupil they start talking much which cause great noise in class.

In the above explanation, we see connection and divergence among teachers and students opinion. Now, I have found very few students think that group work is not effective at all and not necessary. We know all students cannot work together in group; some students just like to be alone. They feel much more comfortable reading without the help of others. Therefore, they (2%) think they do not need group study at all. Some teachers already think it should occur only when it is necessary; where other teachers believe it does not always work. However, everything

has its own reasons. Group work also depends on tasks, situations and time and from the results of my survey, I found both of the teachers and students do believe on it.

From the analysis of my result, I have come to know teachers are not always or often interested to make their students working group. On the other hand, from the student's response it shows the opposite. For me, students as a second language learners need to speak and know the language well. In the class, they do not have enough time to talk or practice except when they get a presentation. However that is not enough; they need more communication. Therefore, group work is somehow useful. Yet, as some of the teachers said, there is the possibility of using their first language when students work with more people. However, teacher administration is necessary. I believe if a teacher divides the group, monitors it in some manner and provide some guidance, there will be no chance to fail group work activity. What is all needed that cooperation among students and teacher

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

After doing my survey, I have found that group work is one of the fundamental aspects for SLA learners and teachers. For Language teachers, they cannot put away this activity aside since they always concern about their students. Though it is not being widely used in all domains, it is somehow useful for specific purpose. It can be perceived that the use of group work has a number of positive effects on some specific learners and difficult task to some extent that we cannot ignore. Therefore, we cannot refuse the importance group work in class. From my research, I have found that despite of having some drawback, both of the teachers and students felt and gave positive opinion about the importance and effectiveness of group work in the class. However, in order to make it more effective the teacher needs to administrate properly before making their students work in a group. Students also need to have a positive attitude towards their partner and teachers instruction before they work together in a group properly. Teachers and students should corporate with each other while having a group work in the class. Since the teacher fronted class sometime fails to accomplish the goal, group work somehow makes a balance between teachers and students to talk and bridges the gap between them. On the other hand, a proper classroom setting is necessary. If the class is big with a number of pupils, teacher can arrange a group work for accomplishing the task. As we know that we learn by negotiating with nature and people, therefore, group work gives opportunity to the students to deal in reality in the class through negotiating, turn taking, suggesting each other.



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## **Appendices**

### **Questionnaire For Students**

1. What is your feeling about group work?
2. When do you prefer to have a group work?
3. Do you think group work helps you to learn the language? Justify your answer
4. Do you understand the text if you study alone? Rate yourself out of 100.
5. In a group study, do you prefer to be with your friends or others? Please briefly explain.
6. What are the skills that help you to improve when you are working in a group?
  - a. Reading b. Writing, c. Speaking d. Listening.

7. Tick the statements that you really prefer
  - a. I want to have group work for every assignment.
  - b. I want to have group work sometimes.
  - c. I like to work only with my best friends in a group all the time.
  - d. I do not need to have any group work.
8. What do you think about problems associated with group work?
9. Can you suggest any other way to make a group study more effective?
10. Give your overall opinion about group work

**Thank you for filling out this questionnaire**

### **Questionnaire for Teachers**

1. When do you prefer group work in your class?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you think group work is effective and why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. While you are having group task, which specific skill you want to focus?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are the benefits that you really get from making the students work in a group?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Do you think students should choose their own group members or the teacher should select members for group work and why?

6. Which is the best statement you think?
  - a. I like when my students work in a group all time.
  - b. I like when my students work in a group when it is necessary.
  - c. I do not like group study.
  - d. I like to do it rarely.
  
7. What are the negative effects you get while having group study in your class?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What are the possible negative impacts of group work that might create a barrier on students learning?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. When and what type of students you think should work in a group? Explain briefly.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Give your overall opinion about group work.

**Thank you for filling out this questionnaire**

